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General News

Special Voting exercise takes off nationwide today

By Persis Roberts

The Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana is conducting the 2024 Special Voting exercise today, December 2, at 328 designated centres nationwide.

This process, designed for individuals with essential election-day roles, includes security personnel, election officials, and accredited media practitioners. It ensures their participation without conflicting with their duties during the December 7 general elections.

Approximately 131,478 voters, representing 0.007% of the 18.7 million registered electorate, are expected to take part. The exercise begins at 7:00 a.m. and will conclude by 5:00 p.m.

The EC reports that all election materials have been deployed and is confident in the process's integrity.

"We are ready to conduct transparent, credible, and peaceful elections," said Jean Mensa, EC Chairperson.

Mrs. Mensa clarified that only pre-approved individuals can vote today. Votes cast will remain uncounted until December 7, when they will be included in the final tally at constituency collation centres. Sealed ballot boxes will be securely stored at police stations until counting.

To ensure a peaceful process, the National Elections Security Taskforce, chaired by Inspector-

General of Police Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, has reassured Ghanaians of robust security arrangements. The EC has emphasized transparency and

adherence to procedures to bolster public confidence.

This exercise precedes Ghana's December 7 polls, where voters will elect a President and 276 Members of Parliament.



File Photo

Pay no attention to divisive prophecies, choose peace - Otumfuo advices Ghanaians ahead of 2024 polls

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, has called on Ghanaians to remain united and vigilant against divisive prophecies as the country prepares for its general elections in December 2024.

This message was delivered during the annual prayer gathering at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi on November 29, where the Chief of Sewua, Nana Kwaku Amankwa Sarkodie, represented the Asantehene.

Otumfuo expressed concern over the rising trend of politically charged prophecies, often shared by religious leaders, which he said could disrupt national peace. "Otumfuo said I should tell you some individuals are engaging in false prophecies.

Ghanaians must focus on what unites us and ignore divisive and false prophecies," Nana Sarkodie conveyed. He emphasised the need for citizens and leaders to prioritise unity and stability during the electoral process.

In Ghana, where religious leaders

often hold significant influence, such prophecies have sparked debates about their impact on voter behaviour.

Analysts suggest that while these messages may sway a portion of the electorate, their overall influence is likely limited compared to key issues like the economy and governance.

According to data from Graphic Online, Ghana's electorate has

a relatively high literacy rate, reducing the likelihood of such prophecies having a widespread effect.

Political observers have noted that charismatic and Pentecostal churches, which constitute a significant portion of the Christian population in Ghana, often serve as platforms for these predictions. While they may shape perceptions among congregants, experts argue that elections are ultimately

determined by voter priorities and turnout.

The Manhyia Palace event also included prayers for the presidential candidate of the New Patriotic Party, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, alongside broader calls for peace. This aligns with recent initiatives, including a peace pact signed by political parties to ensure a harmonious electoral period.



Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene

General News

Ghana launches landmark project to reclaim lands devastated by galamsey

By Persis Roberts

A new initiative aimed at restoring land ravaged by illegal mining, known locally as galamsey, has been launched in Ghana. The pilot project, currently underway in the Ahafo Ano South West District of the Ashanti Region, is being led by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in partnership with the district assembly.

The project, titled “Co-designed Inclusive Landscape Management Plan for Ahafo Ano South West District,” is focused on transforming severely degraded land into sustainable agricultural systems. This comes as a response to the extensive damage caused by galamsey, which has left vast areas of land unproductive, threatening

food security.

The project’s pilot phase, launched in 2022, focuses on Kunsu, one of the most affected communities in the region. Nearly half of the land in the district has been destroyed by illegal mining, but 25 acres have already been successfully reclaimed and are now being used for oil palm plantations and other agricultural activities. The district’s development planning officer, Madam Habiba Abdulai, highlighted the socio-economic benefits of the project, stating that the reclaimed land is restoring livelihoods and improving food security.

IWMI’s Senior Researcher and Project Co-Lead, Dr. Seifu Admassu Tilahun, emphasized the holistic approach of the project, which goes beyond land reclamation

to include sustainable landscape management. He also revealed that IWMI is preparing a training manual to help other districts replicate the project’s success. The goal is to restore over 16,000 hectares of degraded land across Ghana, a significant step toward mitigating the environmental impacts of galamsey.

The project is expected to be

integrated into the district’s five-year development plan and may serve as a model for similar efforts across Sub-Saharan Africa. As Dr. Tilahun concluded, the initiative proves that collaborative, community-driven efforts can turn environmental crises into opportunities for sustainable development.



File Photo

Constituents left in poverty and hopelessness – Cheddar in his ‘Real State of the Nation’ address

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The Presidential Candidate of the New Force Party, Nana Kwame Bediako, popularly known as Cheddar, has expressed disappointment in lawmakers over what he describes as a neglect of their constituents.

In his address titled “The Real State of the Nation” on Saturday, November 30, 2024, the leader of the new force expressed deep concern for the widespread poverty, struggle, pain and hopelessness among constituents, an observation he made during his campaign tour across all 276 constituencies ahead of the 2024 general elections.

He blames the state of the constituents on political leaders who have failed to invest meaningfully in the people and their communities, contributing to the underdevelopment he saw.

“I have discovered more poverty, pain, struggle, pollution, and hopelessness during this trip. Our leaders have not invested in the people and their constituencies,” he stated.

This, he said, has been eye-

opening for him, informing him of the efforts that have to be put in to develop the human resource in the country.

“Tonight, I want to tell everyone who is listening to me that I have had the opportunity to travel around Ghana and I have had the chance to see what we live for and how bad we have treated our

people and that did not bring me down but rather it inspired me and made me realise we have work to do,” he added.

Additionally, Cheddar criticized the laws enacted by Members of Parliament, stating they did not address the actual needs of the people, but rather made worse the challenges the country is battling.

The New Force Party leader urged Ghanaians to prioritize the country’s future over partisan loyalty in the December elections, advocating for informed voting decisions to foster meaningful progress and transformative change for the nation.



Nana Kwame Bediako, Presidential Candidate, New Force

General News

Akufo-Addo faces calls to refund \$58m in stalled national cathedral project

By Persis Roberts

A recent report by Ghana's Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) has reignited controversy over the National Cathedral project, with North Tongu MP Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa demanding financial restitution from President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. The CHRAJ report highlights procurement breaches, alleged mismanagement of funds, and questions over public spending priorities amid economic challenges.

The Commission revealed that approximately \$312,394,049.53 has been spent on the halted project, including \$58 million in what Ablakwa describes as "illegality." CHRAJ found that the contract awarded to Ribade Company Limited, the project's contractor, violated Ghana's procurement laws, rendering it invalid. The report recommended the Public Procurement Authority (PPA) cancel the contract and

urged a forensic audit of the project to determine the use of state funds.

"Having found that the contract awarded to Ribade Company Ltd is void ab initio for being entered into contrary to the mandatory provisions of the Procurement Act, Act 663 as amended by Act 914 the Commission also recommends that the Board of the Public Procurement Authority (PPA) should intervene to cancel the contract for the construction of the National Cathedral between the National Cathedral and Ribade Company as it has the power to do so under the Procurement Act," the Commission reported.

Ablakwa criticized the President's role, stating, "Everything begins and ends at the doorstep of Akufo-Addo," and called for him to refund the \$58 million. "President Akufo-Addo must be made to pay the compensation claims, refund \$58 million and cover the hole. The eminent clergymen were deceived by Akufo-Addo, everything begins and ends at the doorstep of

Akufo-Addo," he told the media in response to CHRAJ's report on the matter.

He also demanded the immediate dissolution of the National Cathedral Secretariat, questioning why board members continue to draw salaries despite the project being stalled for over 30 months.

"The continuous payment for salary to the National Cathedral Board must stop. I don't expect them to see their November salary. A project which has come to a halt for 38 months and the board is receiving a salary?" he added.

CHRAJ's findings followed a 2023 petition by Ablakwa, which highlighted concerns over payments made to JNS Talent Centre Limited and alleged conflicts of interest involving Rev. Victor Kusi-Boateng, a board member of the National Cathedral. The Commission substantiated claims of procurement irregularities but dismissed allegations of conflict of interest.

The National Cathedral, a

centerpiece of President Akufo-Addo's 2016 campaign promises, has faced significant public opposition. Critics argue that taxpayer funds should not be used for its construction, especially given Ghana's pressing economic issues, including a recent debt restructuring program.

CHRAJ's recommendations include prosecuting those responsible for procurement violations and conducting a comprehensive audit of all expenditures linked to the project. Ablakwa emphasized that accountability must be enforced, stating, "The \$58 million must be refunded because we can't spend taxpayers' money on an illegality."



Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana

Police investigating attack on Prof Naana Jane's convoy

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Ghana Police Service has begun investigation into an attack on the convoy of the running mate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Prof. Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang, which occurred on Friday, November 29, 2024.

Earlier reports suggested that one of the vehicles in the convoy of the vice-presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Professor Jane Naana Opoku Agyemang had been attacked on the Akosombo Accra highway.

The driver whose vehicle wind screen was smashed, said he suspects that the other convoy was an "NPP convoy" where one of the Police motor riders threw an object at his vehicle which shattered the wind screen.

However, in a statement released on Saturday, November 30, by

the police, they explained that, "a dispatch rider from the opposite direction allegedly threw an object at the windscreen of a vehicle in the running mate's convoy, causing

damage to the windscreen".

Consequently the police has assured the public that "We would like to assure the public that the matter will be thoroughly

investigated as we are committed to ensuring the safety of all persons before, during and after the 2024 General Elections".



Professor Jane Naana Opoku Agyemang, Vice Presidential Candidate, NDC



General News

‘Our choices are for the living, not the dead’ – Dagbon Overlord urges peace ahead of Dec 7 elections

By Persis Roberts

As Ghanaians gear up for the pivotal Presidential and Parliamentary Elections scheduled for Saturday, December 7, the King and Overlord of Dagbon, Ndan Ya-Naa Abukari II, has issued a heartfelt appeal for peace. Speaking at a sod-cutting ceremony for the reconstruction of the Gbewaa Palace in Yendi, the Dagbon ruler called for a collective commitment to maintaining peace during the electoral process.

“I again use this occasion to appeal to all citizens of Ghana to remain peaceful throughout the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections,” the King stated. “I appeal to all and sundry to aspire to and seek a peaceful environment to continue exercising our choices now and forever.”

Ghana’s elections are highly anticipated and fiercely contested, with rising tensions across the political landscape. Recognising

the stakes, statesmen and institutions have emphasised the importance of peace, echoing the Dagbon Overlord’s sentiments.

Ya-Naa Abukari II reminded Ghanaians that “our choices are for the living, not for the dead,” highlighting the necessity of staying alive to reap the benefits of democracy. He also encouraged issue-based campaigns free of inflammatory language and violence, aligning his message with broader efforts to ensure peaceful elections in the Northern Region and beyond.

The sod-cutting ceremony marked a significant step in the Dagbon Overlord’s 10-year development agenda, which aims to consolidate peace, enhance agricultural productivity, and improve access to education. The reconstruction of the historic Gbewaa Palace symbolises a renewal of the region’s cultural and political legacy.

Beyond the elections, the Dagbon Overlord addressed pressing environmental concerns, urging citizens of the Northern Region to end bush burning, which has contributed to declining agricultural productivity. This call complements ongoing efforts by the newly inaugurated Yendi Peace Centre to foster dialogue and prevent conflicts in the region.

The Yendi Peace Centre, established as a response to historical conflicts, continues to play a pivotal role in promoting unity among the

diverse ethnic groups in Northern Ghana. Leaders across the region have rallied behind the centre’s vision, pledging to uphold peace and resolve disputes through dialogue and mediation.

As Ghana heads to the polls, the Dagbon Overlord’s appeal underscores the need for unity and restraint, reinforcing the shared responsibility of citizens, politicians, and traditional authorities to ensure a peaceful electoral process.



Ndan Ya-Na Abukari II, Gabon Overlord

Govt begins cholera vaccination as death toll hits 21

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

Ghana Health Service (GHS) has begun a nationwide cholera vaccination exercise as the death toll rises to 21. This campaign aims to curb the spread and safeguard lives through vaccination and preventive efforts.

Reports from the GHS suggest that since the outbreak was confirmed on 4th October, Ghana has recorded 2,385 suspected cases, 196 confirmed, and 21 deaths so far. The outbreak has been particularly severe in areas with limited access to clean water and poor sanitation conditions.

Consequently, Service and partners have procured 150,000 doses of Oral Cholera Vaccines to control the ongoing cholera outbreak.

The first phase of the campaign began from 30th November to 3rd December 2024.

The exercise began in hotspot sub-districts of Awutu Senya East

District: Akwellesy, Kasoa North, and Odupong Kpehe targeting individuals ranging between two years and above excluding pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Easter region has reported 22 suspected cases, confirmed two and recorded zero deaths. Western Region has reported about 315 suspected cases, confirmed 47 and recorded 5 deaths.

Greater Accra on the other hand has seen 1032 suspected cases, confirmed 70 and recorded 70 fatalities.

The Central Region has recorded 1016 cases, confirmed 77 and seen 9 deaths.

Speaking at the press launch today, Dr. Patrick Kuma-Aboagye urged the public to maintain proper Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) standards to protect themselves against the disease citing that the vaccine is to help extend protection and not a

dose to replace a healthy lifestyle and preventive measures.

Dr. Frank Lule, the WHO Country Representative, reiterated his organization’s support in the ongoing fight against cholera.

Meanwhile, Zipline Ghana pledged to continue expanding its efforts to improve healthcare access across the country by significantly growing its vaccine delivery program.

Since 2019, Zipline has been using drones to deliver essential medical

supplies to remote areas in Ghana, with backing from Gavi.

Now, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) has announced a two-year extension of its partnership with Zipline and Gavi, which will extend operations to 68 districts facing serious healthcare access challenges from 2024 to 2026.

The goal of this expanded partnership is to close gaps in vaccination coverage in underserved regions.



File Photo

General News

Bawumia pledges to uphold Ghana's cultural values with anti-LGBTQ+ and witchcraft Laws

By Persis Roberts

Vice President and flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia has reiterated his commitment to preserving the nation's cultural and moral values. Speaking to congregants at the Believers Worship Center in Kenyase, Ashanti Region, on 1 December 2024, he pledged to sign the anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-witchcraft accusation bills into law if elected as president.

"I am committed to ensuring that Ghana remains rooted in its cultural and moral values. If elected, I will sign into law the anti-LGBTQ+ bill and the anti-

witchcraft accusation bill because our traditions and beliefs must be protected from undue external influence," he said during the church service.

Dr. Bawumia also sought divine blessings for his presidential campaign and emphasised the importance of peaceful elections. "I believe in the power of prayer, and I call on all of you to pray for Ghana and for the success of the upcoming elections. Without God, we labour in vain," he added.

The Vice President's comments come amid debates over Ghana's anti-LGBTQ+ bill, which seeks to criminalise LGBTQ+ activities, and the anti-witchcraft accusation bill

aimed at addressing abuses linked to witchcraft allegations.

Dr. Bawumia has previously affirmed his firm stance on LGBTQ+ issues, stating that such practices conflict with Ghanaian cultural values and are unacceptable under his leadership. "On this matter of LGBTQ, I want to say again without any equivocation that we will not allow it in Ghana. It is not going to be allowed. Our Bible says no, our Quran says no, and our people say no. So no. That is the answer," he asserted earlier this year.

The Founder of the Believers Worship Center, Stephen Adom Kyei-Duah, welcomed the Vice President's assurances,

commending his dedication to safeguarding Ghanaian traditions. The pastor promised to support Dr. Bawumia's presidential ambitions through prayers, highlighting the significance of his pledges.

These declarations have elicited both support and criticism, reflecting the divisive nature of these legislative efforts. The anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-witchcraft bills have been endorsed by some religious and traditional leaders but have also attracted opposition from human rights groups, citing concerns over discrimination and potential human rights violations.



Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, NPP Presidential Candidate



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Business

Higher tourist arrivals, private sector expansion driving economic growth - BoG

By Persis Roberts

Ghana's economy is showing signs of steady recovery, buoyed by a mix of factors including an uptick in tourism, according to the Bank of Ghana (BoG).

In its latest Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) briefing, the bank highlighted that the economy's performance, as captured by the Composite Index of Economic Activity (CIEA), grew by 2.2% in September 2024 compared to a contraction of 0.4% in the same period last year.

Among the key drivers of this improvement were increased port activities, heightened consumer spending, robust construction, higher private sector credit, and a resurgence in international tourist arrivals. The growth aligns with global trends favouring tourism recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic crippled international travel.

"In the third quarter, the Bank's high frequency real sector indicators pointed to a sustained pick-up in economic activity. The updated real Composite Index of Economic Activity (CIEA) recorded an annual growth of 2.2 percent in September 2024, compared to a contraction of 0.4 percent in the corresponding period of 2023. Major drivers of the improvement in economic activity include increased port activity, households and firms consumption of goods and services, construction activities,

credit to the private sector, and higher tourist arrivals," the latest Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting report read.

Ghana's tourism sector has experienced growth after a steep decline during the pandemic. While international arrivals dropped drastically from 1.3 million in 2019 to 355,000 in 2020, the easing of restrictions and border openings in 2021 began reversing the trend. Recent data shows that tourist numbers continue to improve, particularly from key source markets such as the US, UK, and Nigeria.

Tourism contributed an estimated \$372.6 million in international spending in 2020, a significant decline from pre-pandemic levels but indicative of its potential as a revenue generator. The government's strategic efforts, including the expansion of infrastructure and initiatives like the Year of Return, have been instrumental in reviving the sector.

Despite the positive outlook, the Bank of Ghana cautioned against global risks, including rising energy and food prices due to geopolitical tensions and trade protectionism. Domestically, inflation remains a concern, with projections placing it at 20.1% in 2025, slightly higher than earlier forecasts. However, strong macroeconomic measures and robust policy implementation are expected to anchor growth and stability.

"While global economic conditions

remain favourable, the strength of the US economy coupled with a strong United States dollar and the possibility of a resurgence in global energy and food prices arising from trade protectionism, geopolitical conflicts, and extreme weather conditions will have to be monitored closely for policy responses to ensure stability in the economy. Overall, headline inflation which stood at 20.4 percent in August, rose to 21.5 percent in September and then further to 22.1 percent in October 2024. The rise in inflation has largely been driven by food price pressures and some exchange rate pass-through effects from previous depreciation of the currency. At the time of the last MPC meeting, average inflation forecast a year ahead which stood at 19.0 percent has increased slightly to 20.1 percent at this forecast round. The horizon for inflation to get back within the

target band of 6-10 percent has slightly shifted forward to Q42025 from the original forecast period of Q32025," it added.

The BoG maintained the policy rate at 27%, emphasising the need for consistent vigilance against potential disruptions, including uncertainties tied to the upcoming elections and external debt restructuring challenges.

"In the near-term, strengthening of the currency will augur well for future price developments. Under the circumstances, the Monetary Policy Committee decided to keep the policy rate unchanged at 27 per cent," the statement said.

Looking ahead, a positive assessment by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of Ghana's economic programme could result in a \$360 million disbursement this month, further improving foreign exchange reserves and stabilizing the cedi.



Bank of Ghana Building

NHIA releases GHS 200 million claims payment to accredited health facilities as free dialysis treatment begins

By Abigail Twumwaa Ampofo

The National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) has disbursed GH¢200 million to health facilities across the country to cover outstanding claims as it launched the nationwide free dialysis treatment yesterday December 1, 2024.

The initiative which earlier targeted patients under 18 and those over 60 years old, has been expanded to all renal

patients after the Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia on November 10, 2024 announced the promise of nationwide free dialysis for all renal patients who have registered under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) during his campaign in the Old Tafo constituency.

During a media engagement, Chief Executive Officer of the NHIA, Dr. DaCosta Aboagye, confirmed the

disbursement to cover claims submitted and vetted for the months of September and October 2024.

"We don't have any outstanding claims to pay. Normally, our payments range between GH¢150 million and GH¢200 million. I have told the facilities to bring their claims because we have the money to pay them. NHIS is at its best and back on its feet," Dr DaCosta

Aboagye said.

This latest payment brings the total amount released by the NHIA over the last two months to GH¢1 billion, underscoring the Authority's ongoing commitment to supporting healthcare providers and ensuring the sustainability of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

He went on to reassure Ghanaians his outfits' readiness to ensure the

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Business

NHIA releases GHS 200 million claims payment to accredited health facilities as free dialysis treatment begins

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successful implementation of the free dialysis programme as the NHIA had no outstanding claims to settle. Dr. Aboagye boasted of the scheme's growth in terms of finances, noting that its annual budget has increased by GH¢2 million every year since 2017.

He also shared that the NHIA's 2024 budget totals GH¢6.8 billion, with 50% of it set aside to cover claims.

"As we speak, the claims budget is still underutilized. We have paid over GH¢2 billion in claims this year and still have funds available. We are literally begging facilities to bring their claims," he reiterated.

Accredited hospitals to provide the free dialysis treatment:

Meanwhile, the NHIA has accredited several hospitals across the country to provide free dialysis

treatment to kidney patients registered under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). These include: Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Cape Coast Teaching Hospital, Tamale Teaching Hospital, Ho Teaching Hospital and 37 Military Hospital.

Others are Ridge Regional Hospital, Holy Family Hospital, Berekum, Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital,

Takoradi, Ghana Police Hospital, International Maritime Hospital, Newtown Islamic Hospital Ltd, Eastern Regional Hospital and FirstCare Hospital.

The rest are Trust Hospital Premium Centre, Regional Hospital, Bolgatanga, Upper West Regional Hospital, Volta Regional Hospital, Hohoe, Takoradi Hospital and Hart Adventist Hospital.



Dr. DaCosta Aboagye, CEO, National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA)

International

Ivory Coast: Laurent Gbagbo's ex-wife to run for president

By Africanews

The list of presidential hopefuls in Ivory Coast just grew bigger. The latest entrant is the ex-wife of former President Laurent Gbagbo.

Simone Ehivet won the nomination of her party, the Movement of Capable Generations (MGC) at a congress in her native town of Moossou in Ivory Coast's southeast.

In an acceptance speech, Ehivet listed national reconciliation through an amnesty, food sovereignty, and industrialization as her priorities.

Laurent Gbagbo and Simone

divorced in June of 2023 after 34 years of marriage and decades of joint activism.

A teacher by profession, Ehivet began activism as a trade unionist in the 1970's. Her political star rose when she met Gbagbo in 1973.

Together, they founded the Popular Ivorian Front in 1982 to catalyze opposition to Felix Houphouet Boigny's rule.

During Gbagbo's incarceration for war crimes, the outfit was seized by Pascal Affi N'Guessan who has also announced his candidature for the 2025 election.



Simone Ehivet, MGC Presidential candidate-elect

At least 27 dead after boat capsizes in Nigeria

By Africanews

At least 27 people are reported dead after a boat capsized on the Niger River in central Nigeria, according to local authorities.

The boat was carrying about 200 passengers from the state of Kogi to a food market in the neighbouring state of Niger when it capsized late on Thursday, with more than half reportedly missing, according to Ibrahim Audu, a spokesman for the Niger State Emergency Management Agency.

By Friday evening, rescuers had managed to pull 27 bodies from the river while local divers were still searching for the missing passengers, according to Sandra Musa, spokeswoman for the Kogi State emergency services.

"It's not clear what caused the accident," Musa said. Among possible causes, she listed turbulence on the waterway and the age of the boat, attributing the death toll to the absence of life jackets. None of the bodies recovered had life jackets on, she said.

Rescuers had trouble finding the location of the accident for hours, according to Justin Uwazuruonye,

who is in charge of Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency operations in the state.

Kogi State Governor Ahmed Usman Ododo said in a statement that most of the victims were women,

traders and artisans "involved in legitimate business activities to earn a living and contribute to the economy of the state".



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